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# LABOUR ORGANISER

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**PRICE FIVEPENCE**

## Situations Vacant

**BRISTOL NORTH WEST C.L.P.**—Applications are invited for the post of full-time Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms obtainable from the Secretary, 35 Church Road, Westbury on Trym, Bristol, to whom they must be returned not later than 29th November, 1954.

**WESTBURY C.L.P.**—Applications are invited for the post of Secretary/Agent to the Westbury Constituency Labour Party. House available and full-time clerical assistance provided in a well-equipped office. Marginal seat. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from the Secretary, Westbury C.L.P., Trades and Labour Club, Trowbridge, Wilts., to whom they must be returned not later than 24th November, 1954.

**DARLINGTON C.L.P.**—Applications are invited for the post of Secretary-Agent to Darlington C.L.P., which is a marginal constituency. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms obtainable from Councillor C. Spence, Labour Office, Garden Street, Darlington, to whom they must be returned not later than Saturday, 27th November, 1954.

### WANTED

Urgently required to complete a set for binding, a copy of the 'Labour Organiser' for August, 1953. Will any reader with a copy to spare please forward to BCM/COF, London, W.C.1.

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# THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

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NOVEMBER, 1954

PRICE FIVEPENCE

## Mr. Attlee on Television

by GWILYMM WILLIAMS

WEDNESDAY, 13th October 1954.  
The announcer's clock in the presentation suite at Lime Grove Television Studios is just coming up to 7.45 p.m. MacDonald Hobley is watching the end titles of Television News and Newsreel on his monitor screen.

The titles give way to his own picture announcing 'a party political broadcast on behalf of the Labour Party by the Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee, O.M., C.H., M.P. The broadcast, devised by the Labour Party, comes from the Town Hall, Walthamstow, and will be introduced by William Pickles.'

Over at Walthamstow, William Pickles speaking into a lip microphone at one end of the Council members' room, introduces viewers to a group, including Mr. and Mrs. Attlee seated in front of the television cameras at the other end of the room.

There is Councillor Mrs. Candy, the Mayor of Walthamstow; over on the right we have County Councillor Palethorpe and next to him, Alderman E. C. Redhead . . . the Rt. Hon. Arthur Bottomley, M.P.'

And so on until one of the cameras rests on a close-up of Mr Attlee, pipe in hand, talking about his trip to China.

### First Appearance

Mr. Attlee was making his first appearance on television—a medium for which hitherto he had displayed little enthusiasm, and we welcomed his own suggestion made at a meeting of the Joint Broad-

casting Committee\* in June, that his débüt should take the form of an informal discussion with a group of friends in Walthamstow.

The date was then booked with the B.B.C., who were informed that because the broadcast would be coming from Walthamstow the Party would require the services of an outside broadcasting unit. Equipment is at present in short supply, but the B.B.C. were able to meet our request, notwithstanding the heavy demands which were being made on them for such events as the London v. Moscow athletics match, which was televised not only in this country, but also to France, on the same evening.

The detailed arrangements for the broadcast could not be worked out until Mr. Attlee's return from his world tour. As will be recalled, he did not arrive back in this country until a few days before the opening of the annual conference, and a meeting arranged at Scarborough gave us our first opportunity of discussing these arrangements with him.

A further meeting was held in London immediately after the conference, when the details were discussed with Leonard Miall, Head of Television Talks, who was to be responsible for the B.B.C. arrangements, and with Alan Chivers, who was to

\* The Joint Broadcasting Committee includes representatives of the National Executive Committee and the Parliamentary Labour Party and is responsible for the Party's broadcasting activities on both sound and television.

produce the broadcast. Immediately after this meeting, visits were paid to the Walthamstow Town Hall to choose a suitable room for the broadcast and to enable the B.B.C. engineers to establish the technical framework.

The links between the Walthamstow Town Hall and the transmitter at Alexandra Palace had then to be arranged by the engineers in consultation with the G.P.O., and the availability of power supplies had to be checked with the British Electricity Authority.

On the morning of 13th October, a convoy of B.B.C. vans carrying cameras, microphones, lights and transmission equipment, left Lime Grove for Walthamstow. This was the OB unit with a staff of 25, including camera operators, and sound and lighting engineers. The unit also included a make-up girl who, as it turned out, was not required to do more than apply a dab of powder here and there.

By mid-afternoon, the equipment and the furniture, which was to provide the setting for the broadcast, were in position. The engineers were now able to proceed with lighting and microphone tests, using members of the OB unit and Party representatives as 'stand-ins'. At 5.30 everything stopped for an excellent high-tea, arranged at the Party's request by the borough catering manager.

Shortly after 7 o'clock, the principals took their places on the set for last-minute sound and camera tests. At 7.45 and 30 seconds, they were on the air.

### Breakdown

During the transmission, which otherwise went with a swing one of the cameras broke down with the unfortunate result that we were unable to show Mrs. Attlee making her contribution to the discussion. Such risks are, however, inevitable in an outside broadcast when it is quite impossible to replace a camera at short notice.

Press reaction to the broadcast was, on the whole, encouraging. The *Manchester Guardian* described it as a great success. *The Times* said that Mr. Attlee had brought 'the steady light of integrity and blunt speaking to the television firmament. Randolph Churchill in the *Evening Standard* agreed with Andrew Mellor of the *Daily Herald* by describing Mr. Attlee's débüt as 'a personal triumph'.

Those responsible for the broadcast now

await the wider verdict of Party members who are submitting their opinions in response to the questionnaire which was circulated through party agents and secretaries.

Meanwhile, we are satisfied that the broadcast did achieve its purpose of introducing Mr. Attlee to the television audience. It also had the merit of introducing television to Mr. Attlee.

## NEW AGENTS

THE National Executive Committee has recently approved the following Agency appointments:

**J. BENTON** to Brentford and Chiswick. Aged 25, John Benton has been Secretary-Agent at Taunton for 18 months, prior to which he was Trainee Agent at Coventry.

**A. V. CLARE** to Central Norfolk. Arthur Clare leaves Barnet where he has been Secretary-Agent for the past six years, to take up the vacancy at Central Norfolk. Aged 30, he has been a member of the Party for 15 years.

**J. KOTZ** to St. Marylebone. John Kotz, at 24 years of age, joins the Agency ranks at St. Marylebone. As an active member of the Hackney South Party, he was in control of the 1953 Borough Council Elections in that constituency.

**L. MAYNARD** to Acton. Len Maynard has been a member of the Party for nine years, and Secretary-Agent at Fulham East for the past six years, during which time he has been in control of Parliamentary, London County Council and Borough Council elections in this constituency.

**C. G. K. PAGE** to Shoreditch and Finsbury. After a lapse of several years the Agency at Shoreditch and Finsbury has been re-established. Charles Page, a tailor's cutter by trade, is 54 years of age and has been an active member of the Party in Lewisham for the past 28 years.

**H. TAYLOR** to Ashton-under-Lyne. Herbert Taylor hails from Todmorden and returns to Lancashire after a period of 12 months as Assistant Agent to the Derby Borough Labour Party. Aged 31, he has been a member of the Party for nine years.

# Battle of Titans

THE narrow street at the back of the market was a-hum with traffic and trafficking when a heavily-built young man, hatless and in open-necked shirt, dumped a bulgy bag on the pavement and stood still. Then he pulled out of his pocket a stubby little book, thumbed it, and suddenly bellowed,

"THESE ARE THE LAST DAYS! You'll find it in Luke (so-and-so) and in Matthew (some other figures) . . ."

His was a voice that needed no adventitious aid from an amplifier. Yet the traffic did not come to a stop at this astounding pronouncement. The fishmongers and greengrocers carried on cheating their customers as usual. Harassed mothers continued to shake and slap their squawking offspring. Folk brushed by the young man into and out of a grimy pub. Nobody took a damn bit of notice of him. If the end of the world was imminent, everybody appeared totally unconcerned about it.

I halted my trudging progress, for this young man fascinated me. Not desiring to call attention to myself, I did what I could to look like a bit of the market débris. I did not dare to enter into conversation with him. What could I have discussed?

If I had asked him how he equated his declaration with the conception of the space-time continuum (a subject in which I tread cautiously, for calculation in four dimensions is very complicated for a one-track mind) he would probably have written me off as barmy.

If I had suggested to him that the world was poorer in fantasy and wonder since the gods had departed or were ejected from high Olympus, I feared he would say *Retro me, Sathanas* (if he knew as much Latin as I do, which is very little).

THUS I was constrained to maintain my modest anonymity, although questions thronged in my mind. These are the last days. Very shortly something will happen and there will be no more days. No rosy dawn nor dewy eve. No seed-time nor harvest. No qualifying day for the next Register of Electors.

I thought a lot about that young man as I plodded homewards. In a way, I rather

envied him. He had no philosophic doubts. He had found Eternal Truth. He had what is nowadays called, I believe, a "fixation".

However, very few people share his conviction. Most of us appear to order our affairs, small or large, on the assumption that tomorrow will recur with unfailing regularity. One of the more sober of the Sunday newspapers is at the moment inviting its readers to adventure into the year 2,500, hypothecating the probability of about 200,000 days still ahead of us.

It is difficult to look with any assurance so far into the future, and while I would be the last to discourage the patient reader from keeping his head in the stars I would exhort him to keep his feet firmly on the earth. Notwithstanding the young man's frightful warning to the unheeding populace most people will expect a General Election within a limited number of days, say 400.

There are countless members of the Labour Party whose faith in *their* Cause is just as entire as that young man's in *his*. They proclaim it in their own circles, each in his own way. Sometimes they make converts, but there is little reason to expect that the mass conversion of the British people to socialism will sweep the Labour Party into overwhelming power at that election.

ALL the indications are that behind the public clamour, clash of argument and conflict of policies, it will be a titanic battle of machines, and that the most powerful and efficient of the machines in the field will win the electoral battle. If this estimate of the situation is sound there is, anyhow, one Last Day of dire importance.

It is the Last Day for claims for entry on the Register of Electors now under compilation, namely, December 16th. So get busy on those Lists A, B and C, from November 28th onwards.

# PLANNING PROPAGANDA ACTIVITY

THERE are many socialists who believe in the planning of the economic life of the people of all the world but who do not give a moment's thought to the planning of their own political activities.

It is so much easier to allow things to take their course and to follow events than it is to initiate action. A party that takes the easy road is doomed to electoral failure, if not in the immediate future, then ultimately.

Yet, so many local Labour Parties do precisely that, and not all of them are in constituencies where the Labour vote is weighed and not counted, and where slackness might be excused because of past efforts and current success.

Consider how much of our propaganda is, in fact, arranged. At a General Committee meeting where the business has been dealt with more quickly than usual, a delegate, who does not wish to be home too early, raises the question by asking, "Isn't it time we had a public meeting, Mr. Chairman?"

Because other delegates have another place at which to call before going home, the matter is soon settled by the passing of a resolution instructing the secretary to organise a meeting and to write to Transport House for the services of Mr. Attlee, Mr. Bevan or Mr. Morrison.

None of the three national figures is able to accept the invitation, so that finally, after many weeks of correspondence, an ex-junior minister addresses a hundred and twenty apathetic people gathered together in a hall built to hold a thousand or more.

Or, a circular letter offering a local edition of *Town and Country Post* at special rates is read at an Executive Com-

mittee meeting where it has just been reported that the annual dance has netted a surplus of £43 7s. 11d. Even the treasurer finds it impossible to resist the proposal, made by the League of Youth member, that ten thousand copies of a local edition should be ordered for free distribution.

Ten thousand is a sizeable quantity, but the problem of getting rid of so many copies is solved by sending a thousand to each of the ten wards. What happens after that is anybody's business.

The alternative to such slipshod, ineffective methods is planned activity;

## by 'Socialist'

planned after a survey of needs, means and ends.

A meeting of one hundred and twenty can be a highly successful effort if it is held in the right place, at the right time and on a subject that really matters to the people who are present. The distribution of a thousand leaflets each month for a year in a polling district where the Labour vote is nearly a half of the total, can make all the difference between winning the ward (and perhaps even the constituency) and losing it in an election.

The cost of an unsuccessful meeting often is greater than that of a successful one, and the cost, both in terms of money and effort, of a regular and concentrated distribution of propaganda material is likely to be little more than the spasmodic scattering of publications thinly over the whole constituency. In any event, activity that does not contribute to the electoral success of Labour is wasted, and a great deal of what we do will not stand up to such a test.

Executive and General Committees are not always the best bodies for planning in detail the propaganda of the party. A sub-committee, on which the Executive Committee is represented, as well as those who actually do the propaganda work should be set up. Such a sub-committee obviously must be under the authority of and report to, the Executive, but having approved its plans in general, the sub-committee should be left to do the job.

After surveying the ground it should prepare its plan for the next few months.

One of the factors governing the plan will be the amount of money the Party i

willing to allocate, but some of the activities will finance themselves: a well-organised public meeting with an attractive speaker might even make a profit, and some of the literature can be sold to the public.

The sub-committee's budget must be expected to look something like this:

| Estimated Expenditure                                                          | £   | s. | d. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|
| 4,000 head office leaflets a month for six months                              | 12  | 0  | 0  |
| 12,000 copies localised edition                                                |     |    |    |
| <i>Town and Country Post</i>                                                   | 34  | 8  | 0  |
| Posters, press advertising, room rents and other 'Socialist Week' expenses     | 50  | 0  | 0  |
| Town Hall meeting expenses                                                     | 35  | 0  | 0  |
| Membership campaign expenses, including personal letter and membership leaflet | 15  | 0  | 0  |
| Five school meetings                                                           | 25  | 0  | 0  |
| 5,000 <i>Together</i>                                                          | 55  | 0  | 0  |
|                                                                                | 226 | 8  | 0  |

| Estimated Income                                                       | £   | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|
| Ward share of leaflets cost                                            | 6   | 0  | 0  |
| Ward share of <i>Town and Country Post</i>                             | 17  | 4  | 0  |
| Tickets and Collection, Town Hall meeting                              | 35  | 0  | 0  |
| Share of profit from sale of <i>Together</i>                           | 14  | 0  | 0  |
| Donations from affiliated organisations towards 'Socialist Week'       | 20  | 0  | 0  |
| Collections                                                            | 5   | 0  | 0  |
| Surplus 'Socialist Week' Social Balance to be found by Party Treasurer | 10  | 0  | 0  |
|                                                                        | 119 | 4  | 0  |
|                                                                        | 226 | 8  | 0  |

Just over £100 might be considered rather a heavy cost for six months propaganda activity, but many parties spend more than this sum in efforts which, because they are unplanned, are not very effective.

The sample budget covers activity from January until the end of June. It is recognised that four weeks will be devoted exclusively to the Local Government Elections which are not covered by the budget.

This can be the plan of campaign: the leaflets for monthly distribution in XYZ polling districts, where canvass returns indicate the need for special attention; the Town Hall meeting to be held in

February; and the membership campaign to be held in March, and to be confined to three wards; five school meetings to be held in these key wards to be addressed by the Member and local councillors, two of these meetings to be concerned with the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, because large number of tenants are affected; a 'Socialist Week' for the first week in June.

(To be concluded)

## RURAL PIONEER

**FRANK KNOWLES**, who died on August 16th at the age of 70, will not easily be forgotten in the rural constituencies in which he so often proclaimed Labour's Agricultural Policy.

By his death we have lost a great propagandist. Until last year it was his custom to give several months every year to meetings in rural constituencies. Thousands of people who in the course of time heard him speak on the village green or in the village school were fired by his enthusiasm and determination.

It is probable that since 1921, when he returned to this country from Australia, he undertook more meetings in rural constituencies than any other member of the Labour Party. Agents begged for his services; the demands upon his time were greater than he could meet. He was among the architects of our success in rural constituencies at the 1945 General Election.

For many years Frank Knowles lived in the village of Epworth, Lincolnshire (famous incidentally for its association with John Wesley) and as a magistrate and member of the Isle of Axholme Rural District Council was a familiar figure in the life of that place.

As *The Epworth Bells* in a long article recalls, Frank Knowles was born at Bentham, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and at the age of 26 went to Western Australia, where he became a farmer. He also became a member of the Australian Labour Party, holding many official positions in his district and being on one occasion a candidate for the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia.

# ONLY THE BEST IS GOOD ENOUGH

**Says SARA BARKER**

IT has been said that the local authorities are the handmaidens of Parliament. That is an apt description for those bodies which administer a very large percentage of parliamentary legislation.

Their work can make or mar the good management of every city, town, village or hamlet and thus affect the lives of every citizen for good or ill.

The success of local government depends to a large degree upon the calibre of men and women who serve as councillors, therefore, it is the duty of every party to endeavour to draw up an adequate panel of candidates, worthy of civic responsibility.

## NOT EXPERTS

That does not mean a panel of experts. It takes years of experience as a public representative to master the administrative intricacies of local government. What is necessary is the capacity and willingness to learn both from study and practical experience.

This coming spring borough, urban, rural, parish and county council elections will be fought. Thousands of candidates will be required and party machinery should be in motion, or ready to go into motion, for nomination and selection.

It might be helpful at this stage to remind parties of the correct procedure in relation to nomination and selection.

In borough, urban and rural districts the appropriate local Labour Party should invite nominations from all those organisations represented on its General Committee.

The appropriate body is the Borough or Central Labour Party in a divided borough, the General Committee of a Constituency Labour Party in a single borough and the Local Labour Parties in county constituencies.

Nominations should be returned on a date laid down in the local rules. The nomination should be submitted on an official form giving the information required in accordance with the rules, together with an undertaking to accept and

conform to the Standing Orders for Labour Groups if elected.

It is then the duty of the Executive Committee to consider the nominations and, if it is desired, to interview the nominees. Finally, the Executive Committee should submit the panel to the General Committee for endorsement.

A General Committee has the power to refuse endorsement of a nomination if it so desires. In the event of insufficient nominations having been received the Executive Committee may take what action it feels necessary, subject to the approval of the General Committee. The endorsed panel of candidates, to which selection is confined, is then submitted to the wards which it has been agreed shall be contested.

Individual members and affiliated enrolled members of a ward are entitled to attend the selection conference, together with the members of the Executive Committee of the local Labour Party, or its

Just Published

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representatives (whichever is the accepted practice). Executive Committee members have power to vote.

It should be noted that a ward selection conference is not an ordinary business meeting, but is called for the specific purpose of selecting a candidate. Therefore, it is not in order to enrol affiliated members, or admit new members into individual membership, at a selection conference.

### SELECTION CONFERENCE

The candidates short-listed at a previous meeting should appear before the selection conference. After they have addressed the meeting and answered questions, the vote should be taken immediately without any discussion from the floor. The vote should be by ballot and the successful candidate should have a clear majority over all other candidates.

If any dispute arises in the ward regarding the selection the General Committee has power to make the final decision.

In the case of local authorities where there are no wards nominations are invited

by the appropriate local Labour Party, and candidates are selected by a meeting of individual and enrolled members together with the Executive Committee of the local Labour Party, or its representatives as the case may be.

The nominations for parish council elections are invited by the appropriate local Labour Party and selected by the appropriate parish or the ward Party, if the parish is divided into wards.

In the case of County Council elections the procedure for nomination varies a little throughout the country, but should be carried out in accordance with local rules.

Where there is a county committee, or federation, this is the body which is responsible for inviting, receiving and endorsing the nominations for the panel of county council candidates.

Selecting bodies are the Labour Parties in the county council electoral areas, and the selection conferences should be attended by the individual and enrolled members in each particular area.

## 'ALL WOOL AND A YARD WIDE'

INDUSTRIAL conditions often bear a relationship to descriptive phraseology and in Yorkshire, where the woollen textile industry has made its mark on the lives of many people, it is said of a fine character, "he's all wool and a yard wide".

A few hundred miles above Yorkshire is a struggling, marginal constituency named Caithness and Sutherland.

At the beginning of the year the Constituency Labour Party had a debt of £40 5s. 6d. By the end of July, not only had this debt been cleared and the party met its current expenditure of £400, but also it was the proud possessor of a balance of £594 os. 8d.

It was a pleasure to read the report of the efforts which had made party financial stability possible in this wide-flung constituency.

The local Labour Party in Cannisby, composed largely of crofters, donated a quantity of raw wool; the party in Rogart, a hundred miles away, arranged to have the wool spun and dyed; the wool was then taken over by the Brora party and woven into a pair of blankets. The blankets were rafted and brought in a clear profit of

£40 9s. 6d. How's that!

The folk who make possible such efforts in our Party are "All wool and a yard wide".

### Denscombe Retires

AFTER 29 years employment as a full-time agent, Claude Denscombe has retired.

To mark the occasion, a Presentation Social was held in Wood Green, on the 16th October, at which tributes were paid to him by the Rt. Hon. James Griffiths, M.P., Mr. A. L. Williams, National Agent of the Labour Party, Mr. T. McKellar, Organiser of the Co-operative Party, Mr. L. Cornillie, London Co-operative Society, Political Committee, Mr. D. J. Cousins and local Party Officers.

Alderman Will Irving, M.P., presented Claude with a cheque on behalf of the local Labour Movement.

Claude Denscombe became full-time agent for Caerphilly in 1925 and went to Wallsend in 1927, returning south, when he went to Reading, in 1936. In 1942 he moved to North Tottenham and, following redistribution, he became agent for Wood Green in 1949.

# TRACE REMOVALS

WITH local elections coming along in 1955, and with the prospect of a General Election too, from now on the whole Labour Party needs to get down to solid preparations.

It seems to me that the question of the removal of Labour supporters, linking as it does with the postal vote and the efficient use of cars, is one of prime importance.

Without claiming to have achieved any spectacular results or to have thought of anything new, I nevertheless venture to outline a system, which, if it were to be widely adopted, would result in:

- (a) improved records at C.L.P. level;
- (b) more Labour postal votes in the next election;
- (c) better use of available cars at every election; and
- (d) improved co-operation between C.L.P.s over the removal of members.

Perhaps it would be useful to make some preliminary points. I am one of those who have built up a central postal vote file by copying the Registration Officer's. I duplicated some special index cards, one type for sick, blind, incapacitated or occupational absent voters; another type for removals.

My research showed that very little has been done to obtain postal votes in this constituency (Wells) since 1951. I have been able to classify many of the absent voters, and was most interested in the figures for one rural district and one urban: of 125 names on the file, 51 are known Labour, 49 known Tory, with the remaining 25 uncertain for various reasons.

## ★

In all, there are less than 600 absent voters in this constituency at the moment, and I believe the position is similar in many other constituencies.

My reactions are these: our people have done a pretty good job in the past over sick postal voters and are now well aware of the facilities available; but the important class of postal voters is the removals, and to leave the task of tracing all supporters until an election is imminent

will mean that many votes will be missed. We need a system that can be operated all the time.

I add that removals are important apart from the question of postal votes, for in cities like Bristol and Birmingham, electors can move from one constituency to another but because they are still in the same local authority area they cannot get a postal vote—surely a point worth study by the next Labour Government.

## ★

The scheme is as follows:

### First steps

- (1) The marking of the register;
- (2) for each Labour supporter and 'doubtful' an individual index card to be written up, in pencil;
- (3) the appointment of a C.L.P. postal vote officer;
- (4) a Registration Committee or Register Secretary to be appointed by each L.L.P. and Ward Committee.

NOTES: *Surely the H.O. canvass card, at 7s. 6d. per 1,000, is the best index card available.*

*Personally, I think there is a lot to be said for the agent being the P.V.O. and leaving someone else to deal with fund-raising.*

### The procedure

- (1) When a supporter moves, to another parish, district, borough or constituency, his card with his new address is sent to the postal vote officer.
- (2) Where the L.L.P. or Ward Committee has contacted him and obtained completion of form R.P.F.8 before he moved, then this form is forwarded with the index card.
- (3) Where the official form has not been completed it will be the duty of the P.V.O. to supply one. Contact can be either in person, if at all possible, or else through Party secretaries. But where satisfactory arrangements of this nature cannot be made, the P.V.O. will post to the elector a form R.P.F.8, an explanatory letter, and a stamped, addressed envelope for the return of the completed form.
- (4) For each completed form R.P.F.8 the P.V.O. will write out a special postal

# WIN NEXT ELECTION

voters' index card and add it to his central file.

(5) After this is done he posts the forms R.P.F.8.

(6) The H.O. index card is marked 'Postal vote obtained' and is then dispatched to the appropriate officer in the elector's new constituency or area, through Party channels.

(7) Where a completed form R.P.F.8 is not obtained the index card is held for attention later.

**NOTES:** *The stamped, addressed envelope is the key to success, but in some areas Party officers will co-operate adequately. The P.V.O. needs to be supplied with copies of a suitable duplicated letter, perhaps from the M.P. or candidate.*

Of one thing I am convinced: if all C.L.P.s were to adopt this system the Labour Party would do well with the postal vote in the next election and also would use the cars at its disposal to much better advantage.



There are other points to round off the picture. I have regularly supplied official postal vote forms to all Party units. To hold the various cards I have had neat wooden boxes made, each holding 500 cards. (They will also take 6 in. x 4 in. cards, such as membership application cards.) It is important to note that tracking removals must start from 11th October — immediately after the qualifying date. Anyone who moves after 10th October is a possible postal voter.

Next, there is the question of getting action. A check should be called for when lists B and C are published on 29th November. Perhaps the publication of the new register on 15th February, 1955, is the time for the second check. Then there should be a run through before the various local elections, and, of course, another when the election is imminent.

In the actual election campaign the method of sending all applications for postal votes through the P.V.O. will be continued right up to the last day for applications to be made. (On the last day

applications must necessarily be posted direct.)

It will be obvious that when the R.O. provides the election agent with the complete list of postal voters, the P.V.O. will have a very good idea of the percentage who are Labour. I add that my Party intends to deal with the posting of election addresses to postal voters from the Central Committee Rooms, and the postal vote file makes this possible.



I hope parties will note some of the advantages of this scheme, such as knowing at the start of an election campaign the names and addresses of those Labour supporters who have moved and *have obtained postal votes and those who have not.*

I hope they will not be overawed by the problem, "Who's going to do it all?" We must ask ourselves, "Do we want to win the next election or not?" Again, if some feel they have a better scheme—all right! Then let's hear about it, for time is getting short.

Lastly, I suggest that Head Office should promote a campaign to draw attention to the need for action. So, I submit, should every unit of the Party: Regional Council, County Federation, Constituency Party, down to Local Party and Ward Committee. Then, indeed, Labour will get things done . . .

**Richard Wevell**

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READERS of 'Horsham appoints an Agent', which appeared in the October issue of the *Labour Organiser*, will be sorry to hear that Mr. Harry Roberts of Doncaster has, on doctor's advice, indicated that he is unable to take up his appointment as full-time Agent for the Horsham Division.

Mr. Frank Cecil Green, full-time Agent for the Westbury Division, has been appointed to Horsham in place of Mr. Roberts, and it is expected that he will commence his new duties in January next.

F. SHEPHERD

# FAVERSHAM FÊTE DAY WAS DRY!

by Will Gray

FOR the past four years the Faversham Constituency Labour Party have organised a summer fête, and this year, despite a bad summer, we had our first fête with fine weather!

Our fête has been organised for propaganda effect rather than for monetary gain and this year we were successful in attracting over 10,000 people, who, for the modest sum of sixpence each, were given eight hours of pleasure with special arena entertainments costing over £250 to display.

These entertainment items included a motor-cycle team display, a trapeze and trampoline display, performing alsatians, a film show and fireworks. A commercial fun fair paid us to be present and thus we avoided having to organise our own side-shows.

An outside fun fair does not bring in as much profit as would be the case if we organised our own sideshows, but it has other advantages. It gives an added brightness, looks more impressive, relieves us of having to find many extra helpers, provides us with electric light for the marquees and tents, and helps to enclose the ground, making it necessary for the public to come inside, instead of watching from the outside.

## OUTSIDE CATERER

Catering for thousands of people at any time is no easy matter, especially when, in the event of bad weather, one is faced with the problem of disposing of a great deal of food. Because of this we had an outside caterer, who paid us a percentage of his takings. Ice cream was similarly arranged. Minerals, crisps, and sweets were sold by ourselves, as we were able to arrange a 'sale or return' basis. We sold 184 dozen minerals, 150 tins of potato crisps and over £87 worth of ice cream and more than £20 worth of sweets.

We published a 28-page programme, the cost of which was almost met by the revenue from advertisements from trade unions, Co-operative societies, etc. These were well illustrated with photographs and

pictures and sold at sixpence each.

Extensive publicity had been given to the fête by sixteen sheet and silk screen double crown posters, both with the important details in 'dayglo'. Advertisements were also well displayed in the local Press. Duplicated invitation letters were sent to all Labour Parties in Kent and some in London and Surrey. This year about 600 visitors visited us from outside constituencies.

Speechmaking was confined to the opening ceremony and was limited to about a half hour, as this type of function does not lend itself to long speeches.

## USEFUL SERVICE

Useful service was rendered by the *Daily Herald* Mobile Broadcast Unit, and *Reynolds News* arranged a special edition on the following day with pictures of the fête.

Our biggest concern always is the weather on the day. To insure against a loss by wet weather carries with it a large premium and we always concentrate on pushing the sale of tickets before the day. As the expenditure on the day amounts to anything between £500 and £600 it will be obvious that sales before the day are an important item.

The three previous years we have had rain (two of them being almost 'wash-outs' an hour or two after the opening). Yet in only one year (1953) did we lose money, and then only £3. The publicity we obtained, however, was worth much more than the financial loss. The other two years we made £80 and £145, and this year £130, but the value of the fête itself is worth a great deal more.

Our charge for admission remains low, and the charges on the stalls and catering, etc., have been kept modest. In fact we have been told we are too cheap and never that we have been too dear. It has always been a day which has been within the reach of the pocket of the old age pensioner and the man with a family. Also, for those that travel a distance it helps to make it a day out at a reasonable cost.

We are now preparing for next year. Can we look forward to a party from your constituency joining us?

# Full-Time By-Election Team Needed

STATISTICS show that on average 12 Parliamentary by-elections take place every year. In 1952 there were 10, and in the following year there were 14. Even more will take place before the end of 1954.

Unfortunately, a high proportion of by-elections occur in constituencies without full-time agents. This perhaps is not surprising, as a fair proportion are in safe Labour or Conservative constituencies, where the Labour Party has not felt an urgent need to appoint an agent. Even when by-elections occur in constituencies with full-time agents it is usually necessary to obtain the services of additional experienced full-time personnel.

As an alternative to calling in agents from neighbouring constituencies, how much more satisfactory it would be if there was a full-time by-election team available to come into the constituency. As an example, during the latter part of the last war the Common Wealth Party had a small team of key personnel who, with great success, devoted themselves almost entirely to by-elections.

## SPECIALISTS NEEDED

It is becoming increasingly necessary to have specialists available to take over key positions during by-election campaigns. The Labour Party therefore ought seriously to consider forming a by-election team. This might consist of four or five persons who, while specialising as canvassing officer, meetings and transport officer, postal vote officer, etc., would be sufficiently highly trained to undertake any of these duties. The team ought, of course, to be headed by an experienced agent, and include a competent secretary.

Although on first sight this idea seems most attractive, a number of problems would have to be solved. The first is obviously financial. The upkeep of a by-election team, depending on the size, would probably cost between £3,000 and £4,000 a year.

A considerable part of this expense would, of course, be met from Parliamentary by-election expenses. If only by-elections spaced themselves out evenly

throughout the year, there would be sufficient work to keep the team almost permanently employed. On this basis the National Executive Committee would only be responsible for a fraction of the cost of upkeep.

Unfortunately, the Labour Party has comparatively limited control over the timing of by-elections so it is obvious that there would be occasions when the services of the team would not be required.

## MARGINALS TOO

During these periods the team could be used in marginal constituencies, perhaps being hired out at a subsidised rate to local parties for short periods. In addition there are constituencies where it is known that by-elections are likely to take place in the course of two or three months. In such cases the services of the team for a period before the beginning of the by-election might be invaluable.

If reasonable salaries are offered, there would be no difficulty in recruiting single young men and women willing to join the team for a limited period. Team members could be engaged by the National Executive Committee under annual contract. While 12 months' work with the team would be strenuous, it would provide the right type of person with wonderful training in election technique.

During Parliamentary General Elections, all members of the team would be available to act as agents in highly marginal constituencies without permanent full-time agents.

There are a number of advantages in having a full-time, properly equipped by-election team. Think of the headaches which would be saved if it had its own large car or shooting brake, and possibly a caravan. It also ought to have such by-election necessities as a loudspeaker, typewriter, duplicator and election stationery.

Members of the team would be free from financial worry as they would be sure of receiving their salary at the end of the month. It would be interesting to know to what degree the work of many agents suffer owing to uncertainty about their salaries.

Team members could be selected with a

view to ensuring that they are the type of persons able and willing to co-operate with voluntary workers, and give training to other prospective agents who might be engaged in the Campaign.

Much disruption of work would be avoided both in regional offices and in constituencies which frequently lose their agents during by-elections. Some agents in the Southern region all too frequently find themselves engaged in Parliamentary by-elections in neighbouring constituencies.

If the plan became operative, it would necessitate spending a rather high proportion of the total by-election expenses on staff; but what full-time agent would suggest that this is other than money well spent?

**ARTHUR TADMAN**

## CANDIDATES

THE following were endorsed as prospective Parliamentary candidates at the September meeting of the National Executive Committee:

|                          |     |                          |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| Cheadle                  | ... | Mr. H. V. Stone          |
| North Ilford             | ... | Mr. R. Groves            |
| Aldershot                | ... | Mr. W. A. Cuthbertson    |
| Dover                    | ... | Mr. H. W. Lee            |
| Chelsea                  | ... | Mr. S. Fordyce           |
| Wells                    | ... | Dr. M. Bresler           |
| Halttemprice             | ... | Mr. C. W. Bridges        |
| Wakefield                | ... | Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones |
| Aberdare                 | ... | Mr. A. R. Probert        |
| Caithness and Sutherland | ... | Mr. H. F. Sutherland     |



|                                                                      |                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Co-operative Candidates running in association with the Labour Party |                |
| East Ham South                                                       | Mr. A. E. Oram |
| Morpeth                                                              | Mr. W. J. Owen |



### Withdrawal of Candidatures

|                   |     |                |
|-------------------|-----|----------------|
| Aldershot         | ... | Mr. N. Hidden  |
| South West Herts. | ... | Mr. L. Allaker |
| Wembley North     | ... | Mr. P. Ridley  |

## USING THE RECESS

OUR Member of Parliament has just completed a week in the constituency. The Parliamentary recess provides the rare opportunity of showing the M.P. a cross-section of what is going off in the area, and the public learn of the Member's interest in them. I have long held the view, that a representative of the people should familiarise himself with the day-to-day industrial problems of the workers he represents, so that he can understand what prompts their point of view, produced by the conditions of their employment, their social amenities and their private interests.

This is how we go about it. We discuss the various developments which are taking place to achieve a balanced programme, then I go ahead and arrange the programme. This year, tours of an electricity generating station, the size of the biggest gas generating plant in the east Midlands area, a large new electronic engineering factory, specialising in aircraft wiring, an electrical elements factory, a new sweet factory were all carried out. Visits to a newly-opened technical high school and a large new housing estate were also fitted in. Also small meetings were held each night of the week, divided between difficult areas and strongholds.

My M.P. is a keen gardening enthusiast and angler, so he joined in two big fishing competitions in which some 300 competed, and put on a display of vegetables in addition to judging a gardening society show.

The result has been, by carefully informing the press beforehand, lots of publicity and photos in the press, hundreds of workers have seen, or learned of the M.P.'s interest in their works, more still have spent their leisure time with him, and newly installed housing estate tenants have aired their views, and the relationship between technical education and filling jobs in the new light industries has been made apparent to him.

A healthy relationship now exists between firms who previously had only heard of their Parliamentary representative. Public relations all round have been improved.

**V. M. Thornes**

# WHO SHOULD THE CLERK TELL?

by L. G. Sims

**A** N article of considerable importance to candidates and agents in local government elections appeared in a recent issue of the *Municipal Journal*. It dealt with the question of election expenses and the position of Clerks to councils where there had been a failure to observe the strict letter of the law.

Election agents are required by law to submit their Return of Election Expenses to the Clerk of the local authority for which the election is held. Many Clerks, it was stated, found that the provisions of Section 63 of the Representation of the People Act, 1949 (which deals with the incurring of expense) had been ignored, especially in respect of money expended by outside bodies.

## SECTION 63

Section 63 lays down that no expense shall, with a view to promoting or procuring the election of a candidate, be incurred by any person other than the candidate, his election agent and persons authorised in writing by the election agent on account of:

Public meetings or public displays; Issuing advertisements, circulars or publications;

Presenting to the electors the candidate or his views or disparaging another candidate.

Where persons are authorised in writing by the election agent, a specific procedure has to be followed and prescribed forms used.

Included in this procedure is the stipulation that within 14 days after the publication of the result of the election, the authorised persons must submit to the Clerk of the council a return of those expenses, stating the election and the candidate in whose support the money was spent. This return must be accompanied by a signed declaration of the person incurring the expense and the written authorisation of the election agent.

This being the case, what is the position of a Clerk who is aware, either from his own knowledge or from the Return of Election Expenses which is submitted

later, that expenses have been incurred by outside bodies and that no steps have been taken to comply with the law?

Should he do nothing or should he take steps to remedy the situation? The omission is clearly an election offence and he, the Clerk, has to undertake specific functions under the Act.

In the opinion of the *Municipal Journal* the Clerk must certainly bring the omission to the notice of the candidate, election agent and the person failing to make the return. A late return, it is thought, is better than no return at all.

Another important point then arises—should the Clerk go further than that? Again the *Municipal Journal* thinks he should. An election offence, having been committed, should be reported to the council or at least to the Mayor or Chairman.

The grounds for this view are that the election is part of the mechanism of the council itself and the Clerk has, therefore, a duty to report its defects. There is another aspect too. What if the offence is discovered by others and they take action? In such a case the Clerk would be in a most invidious position.

The article, in clinching its argument, stated that the views expressed are confirmed by an opinion of counsel given to one of the local authority associations.

Because of the complicated requirements of Section 63, and the possibility of such mishaps as stated, we have always advised election agents against giving authorisations to outside bodies, or to agree in any way with suggestions by which the interest of the candidate could be promoted at the expense of the outside body.

Where a local society, or trade union branch, wishes to publish any election matter or circularise its members about the election, the rigorous requirements of Section 63 must be pointed out.

The alternative procedure, which we advocate, is that the election agent first gives an official written order (not authorisation) for the circulars, bills, or whatever it is. The organisation will give the agent a receipt for the amount involved

and he will issue a *pro forma* receipt to them as a donation to the election fund.

This makes the business a purchase by the agent and he can then allow it to be distributed. The amount, plus any other cost involved in distribution, is then included in the Return of Election Expenses in the ordinary way. The donation, of course, is entered as income for the election.

#### SLIPS MADE

Slips, other than failure to make adequate returns can arise, and what is thought to be correct procedure in respect of returns, applies in equal force to other requirements of electoral law. Such an article as that in the *Municipal Journal*

is bound to receive the attention of Clerks to local authorities and will doubtless be accepted as good advice. Let us make sure that we do not make mistakes or omissions that can lead to difficulties, especially next year when we have the whole series of local government elections to face.

The best way to safeguard this is by making sure our candidates and agents are fully conversant with their duties and responsibilities, and by following the advice and guidance given in our Party publications and in the 'Reminders' that are sent out immediately before and during the election.

#### TO THE EDITOR

## ANY QUESTIONS?

SIR,—Peter Moyes makes some good points about his method of arranging 'Any Questions?' meetings, but there are others he does not mention and his conclusions are not valid for all constituencies.

He says nothing about the questioners asking their own questions. I agree with asking for questions in writing and my method is to provide a copy for the questioner and another for the question-master. Then questions are numbered and questioners get up and ask their own questions. In other words, the B.B.C. methods are copied in the 'Any Questions?' I arrange.

Another matter is the composition of the team. I have always been able to get Liberals and Conservatives to take part and our members now consider a balanced team an essential. The only thing which puzzles me is that the other sides still come, since our team members usually have a good time in pricking Tory bubbles with the poniard of truth.

Of course, the circumstances in each constituency are different. I would say that in the West country 'Any Questions?' are declining in popularity. They are beginning to be overdone.

Certainly I find that our local papers are not much interested in them. My reporter friends tell me, "If your candidate is making a policy statement our editors will use it. But they are no longer interested in the replies given to the questions you get."

Which means that here, public meetings must still be arranged. Since our local editors take the line they do, the reporters will come to a public meeting, but they do not come to the 'Any Questions?' efforts.

Serious politicians must deplore the tendency to wrap up every intelligent discussion in a cloak of entertainment. It seems that the public is getting to the pitch that they cannot read a newspaper unless the pages are made up of snippets, cannot absorb an idea unless it is presented with pictorial charts or film displays.

I believe a reaction will set in. I think that anyone with an important message who can state it with fire and conviction will draw a crowd, whatever medium he uses for giving it. By all means let us pay due attention to ways of saying things, but don't let anyone suppose that this is the answer to apathy and the making of converts. *The real answer lies in what we have to say.*

RICHARD WEVELL

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John Keys, West Woolwich Agent, who described his party's membership campaign in last month's *Labour Organise* informs us that 1,100 new members have now been enrolled. In this year's Annual Report West Woolwich is shown as already having 6,051 individual members.

## Around the Regions

# N.A.L.S.O. RECRUITS 4,081

IN view of the size of the North West Region—81 Parliamentary Constituencies—we urged upon Head Office the necessity of letting us have additional help through the N.A.L.S.O. Canvassing Teams, and as a result two teams were allocated to us for three weeks and one for the fourth week.

Following the practice of last year, the Assistant Organiser, Mr. A. A. Johnson, was placed in charge of the campaign and he reports as follows:

"Bearing in mind the experience gained during last year's campaign, much thought and planning, entailing a good deal of negotiation with the constituency parties concerned, had been put into this year's arrangements and from the results achieved it is apparent that all the work done was well worth while.

"The total number of new members enrolled by the teams was 4,081, made up as follows:

|                      |     |       |
|----------------------|-----|-------|
| Oldham East and West | ... | 1,410 |
| West Derby           | ... | 619   |
| Walton               | ... | 391   |
| Kirkdale             | ... | 164   |
| Accrington           | ... | 604   |
| Rossendale           | ... | 326   |
| Chorley              | ... | 250   |
| Stalybridge and Hyde | ... | 317   |

"The teams consisted of 10 members for the first two weeks, nine for the third week and five for the fourth. A good number of local members supplemented the work of the teams but the members enrolled by these workers are not counted in the above-mentioned figures.

"It is obvious from the results obtained that new members can be enrolled very easily, especially when one realises that the majority of the members of the N.A.L.S.O. teams are inexperienced in this type of work.

"It is also obvious that the mere signature on a membership form is not in itself sufficient. On many occasions the work of the team had to be slowed down and indeed halted owing to the inability of

local parties to absorb the newly-enrolled membership into their existing organisations.

"In addition to enrolling members, a terrific amount of information was gathered by the teams. Postal votes were registered, removals traced, and most important a good number of new active workers contacted.

"All this information was noted in a special form produced for the campaign and used in all constituencies, and agents and secretaries have since paid tribute not only to the work of the team but to the amount of information gathered and supplied to them.

"What are the lessons and the value of such campaigns? First, the large increase in individual membership. Second, establishing the fact that there are many thousands of individuals only waiting a request to become members of the Party. Third, the information about electors which is gathered and if preserved and used may make the difference between winning and losing a parliamentary or local government election. Fourth, the engendering among Local Party members the feeling that they are not alone in the day-to-day problems of modern political organisation. The creation of the feeling that they are recognised by a higher authority.

"The re-kindling of their enthusiasm which leads to a keener participation in their normal organising work. Probably this infusion of new spirit into the local organisation is the most important contribution that is made and the teams left each area knowing that they had made a valuable contribution not only in membership figures, but to the morale of the Party.

"During the canvass every effort was made to secure at least the first month's contribution. Special membership forms were produced locally bearing a detachable receipt slip, which upon payment was completed and handed to the new member. This is important as it proved to the individual the business capacity of the Party.

"In no cases were membership cards

handled by the canvassers. On the special forms produced there was ample space for all types of information gathered and in no case was the canvasser in possession of the Register of Electors, the canvass being conducted on a door to door basis which in some cases allowed for previous canvasses to be checked.

"This type of campaign is useful and it is hoped will be continued. It gave the opportunity of long-term planning on organisation which in far too many cases is lacking. It gave the opportunity to the constituency parties to work in close liaison with the Regional Office, and it also gave the opportunity to undertake something on a larger scale than is possible in many instances.

"Yes, the campaigns are well worth while and if in the North West we can in future years obtain similar, or perhaps better, results, then the number of applications from marginal constituencies for the services of the teams will be in ever-increasing numbers.

"Finally, as this year's campaign may be the last before a General Election, the information gathered and the membership enrolled will be of the greatest value to those parties in whose constituencies the teams worked."

North Western R. C. WALLIS

## Week's Work

THE Conway constituency is situated in the County of Caernarvon, in North Wales. It is made up of seaside resorts and quarrying districts, as well as an agricultural area. During one week in September no less than 524 new members were recruited.

How was it done? Here I had better explain that a N.A.L.S.O. canvassing team had been engaged for one week to conduct a membership campaign in one or two selected parts of the constituency assisted by Mr. Hubert Morgan, Assistant Regional Organiser.

Some care was taken in the selecting of the members of the team in consultation with the area representative of N.A.L.S.O. It was eventually decided to appoint five members of the team, all living within the North Wales area. This meant that each of the five would know something

about Conway and be able, if necessary, to converse in Welsh.

The Constituency Labour Party Executive Committee had decided that the headquarters for the five students should be Llandudno. This meant that they could work the selected areas which were in striking distance of their headquarters. At the end of the week's campaign they were able to report that they had issued 524 membership cards and received at least one month's contribution on each card issued.

It should be further explained that Conway is a Marginal Constituency and the increased membership ought to assist in increased Party activity with a view to our winning this constituency at the next election.

The fact that such a large number of members were recruited in the space of one week proves conclusively what some of us have been saying for a long time (a) that there are a lot of people who would join the Labour Party if only approached and invited to do so; (b) that a door-to-door canvass, which means a personal approach, is still the best way of canvassing for the Labour Party.

This success, however, has brought with it another problem for the Constituency Labour Party, which is going to be more difficult than the recruitment of members, and that is the maintaining of the membership.

I am glad to learn that the Constituency Labour Party is giving this matter special attention, and I sincerely hope that these new members will be made very welcome by the Local Labour Parties and furthermore that facilities will be provided which will enable the full membership to play its part in the building up of yet a stronger and more influential party in Conway.

Welsh

C. PROTHERO

## Left Off

HAROLD CROFT, doyen of organisers, prince of lecturers and best of good fellows, used to tell us that the three most important qualities required of organisers were zeal, method and persistence. Zeal is the only antidote to apathy; method the answer to ineffectiveness and persistence the synonym of success.

Taking his words to heart, we have been

seeking to stimulate Party members in the search for electoral success, especially in the marginal constituencies. The goldmine of organising and the currency of electoral success is to be found in the Register of Electors. But the gold must be minted as a marked register before it can be used for the purpose we have in mind.

In some constituencies we have had the help of the N.A.L.S.O. Canvassing Team. Efforts were directed towards recruiting new members, and also to preparing lists of names of persons who were either omitted from the 1954 register, or who will qualify on 10th October, and this, of course, includes 'Y' voters.

'Objections' were also listed, and should these names appear again on the Lists to be available from 28 November we shall raise the objections before the closing date of 16th December.

The 1955 Register, which becomes effective on 16th February, may well be a vital one for Labour. We shall have to fight county, municipal and district council elections on it, and possibly a General Election as well.

In one of our marginal constituencies we have had a careful door-to-door check of the existing register in one ward. We discovered 280 Labour supporters whose names were not on the 1954 Register, but ought to have been. This revelation confirmed our impression that not enough work was being put into registration by our local Labour Parties in some areas. We discovered some Tories too in the same position, but strangely enough, immediately we left their doors we were afflicted by a peculiar form of amnesia!

Another finding we made was that many parties did not realise that electors who had changed their residence since the last qualifying date, and had removed from one Borough or County Electoral Division to another, were entitled to claim a postal vote for Parliamentary elections.

Possibly the fact that we have not had a General Election since 1951 has tended to obscure this postal vote provision. Nevertheless, it is of great importance, especially in county constituencies, where new housing schemes have drawn upon several surrounding electoral areas for inhabitants.

Any removals to these new housing areas after 10th October should therefore be interviewed to find out whether they support Labour, and if so, whether they

have moved out of one electoral area into another and thereby qualify for a postal vote.

Remember, the Tories claimed they won the last election because of their attention to the postal vote.

Scottish W. G. MARSHALL

## Regional Rally

THE second regional rally was held in the grounds of the Co-operative College, near Loughborough, on the 4th September. The weather started badly and we had rain until about one o'clock. It then cleared and we had a perfect afternoon, but I have no doubt the attendance of about 1,000 would have been much bigger if the morning had been fine.

A full programme of events was carried through as follows:

- 2.30 p.m. Concert by Basford Hall (Miners) Silver Band.
- 2.45 p.m. Fashion and Dancing Display. (The Fashion Show by courtesy of the Nottingham Co-operative Society Ltd. and Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd. and the Dancing Display by Mayfair School of Dancing, Loughborough). Swimming Exhibition. George Lindgren, M.P.
- 4.15 p.m. Demonstration. Speakers: Rt. Hon. Sir Frank Soskice, Q.C., M.P. (Labour Party), Arthur Skeffington, M.P. (Co-op), George Lindgren, M.P. (Trade Unions). Children's Sports.
- 5.30 p.m. Cricket Match—Parliamentary XI v. Regional Council XI. Fashion and Dancing Display (second performance).
- 7 p.m. Concert by Basford Hall (Miners) Silver Band.

In addition, a cake competition and a children's fancy dress parade were held. In the cake competition we had the following classes: Boys up to 15, girls up to 15, League of Youth age and open class. We had more entries in the girls up to 15 than any other. That, I am sure, shows the art of cooking is not dying out.

Side-shows provided by various parties in the region added to the afternoon's attractions.

The cricket match resulted in a win for the second time for the Regional Council XI. The Parliamentary team included Sir Frank Soskice, Arthur Skeffington and

George Lindgren, all of whom had a busy afternoon.

A bookstall of literature supplied by Transport House took nearly £5.

George Lindgren's swimming exhibition was a very popular attraction.

We made a very small profit in terms of £ s. d., but I am sure the event was very much more successful in other ways and we have been asked by many parties to have another one next year.

It would not be right to conclude an account of this rally without paying a tribute to a number of organisations who very materially contributed to the success of it; to the Nottinghamshire Miners' Union who provided the Basford Miners' Band; the Nottingham Co-operative Society and the Co-operative Wholesale Society who staged the fashion parade, provided the prizes and judged the cake competition; the staff of the Co-operative College for all their help and assistance; and finally to members of the Regional Executive Committee who did most of the stewarding on the day itself.

East Midlands J. CATTERMOLE

## Rural Campaign

THE West Midlands Regional Council has, from time to time, attempted to organise co-operation between strong Labour areas and nearby marginal and difficult rural constituencies. Despite consultations held a few years ago, which appeared to have paved the way, very little real progress has been made.

A resolution was carried at the 1953 Regional Meeting which instructed the Executive Committee to: "Pursue with zeal co-operation between rural and industrial constituencies."

It was soon found that any plans in this direction received little backing in the form of local support from the area to receive the help, and that safe industrial parties could only be persuaded to give assistance if firm plans were directed from the Regional Office.

It was soon evident that unless the Regional Office planned the necessary transport and literature and directed the work on the spot, this work would be of limited character and rather ineffective.

The Regional Council, however, has no financial resources, so it has been decided to launch an appeal to affiliated organisations, and to those Constituency Labour Parties well placed financially (yes, there

are some despite what is frequently heard!). This appeal has only been open for three weeks, but already around £1000 has been received or promised.

We can look forward to receiving sufficient finance to help us plan this work. How do we hope to go about it? We shall obtain from the rural constituency details of the areas in which it will be best for us to work. The appropriate register will be obtained and prepared. The Labour constituency to give the help will be asked to build up, say, two car loads of workers to visit the particular areas for canvassing, both to mark the register and to recruit new members and, of course, not overlooking postal votes, and in some cases, where appropriate, for loudspeaker work.

The Regional Council will meet expenses of transport and literature, and it is proposed that the Assistant Regional Organiser will be with the teams as far as is possible and supervise the work.

We are confident this work can achieve results. It will certainly give heart to the difficult rural constituencies.

Whilst we are able to give practical help in many ways to the marginal constituencies, we realise that consideration has to be given to our colleagues in these difficult areas, many of them very large constituencies with only a small handful of keen and loyal workers.

West Midlands H. R. UNDERHILL

## HARRY STODDART

WE regret to announce the death of Harry Stoddart, which took place at his home in Gosforth, Northumberland, on 9th October.

Harry Stoddart had given a lifetime of service to the Labour Movement in the North. After many years as the Divisional Organiser of the Independent Labour Party, he became Labour Party agent at Gateshead, though his name will always be associated in the memory of Labour Party stalwarts with the town of Jarrow, where he served as agent from 1933 until his retirement last year.

He retired after the Margate Conference from the Labour Party's Conference Arrangements Committee, on which he served for several years. He was a keen member of the Agents' Union, serving on the National Executive Committee for a term, and acting as District Secretary.